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SPECIAL TOPICS

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Chapter 4: The Revolution



Christopher Vail's Revolution

In the summer of 1775, with the news of Lexington and Concord fresh in their memories, the aroused American colonies stood on the threshold of revolution. Those who chose to fight in the new Continental Army stepped forward, one by one.

- [Christopher Vail's Journal \(1775-1782\)](#)
- [Descendant: Carl Vail](#)
- [Preludes to a War for Freedom](#)



The Plot to Kidnap Washington

A miserably bungled plot to kidnap George Washington and assassinate his chief officers led to the hanging of one of his special guards, the jailing of the mayor of New York, and a stepped-up search for Loyalists on Long Island.

[History Minute: Thomas Hickey](#)

(RealAudio)

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[The Patriots' First Big Test](#)

On Flatbush Road, near the village of Brooklyn, 18-year-old Michael Graham looked death in the face. It was early in the afternoon of Aug. 27, 1776, and the Pennsylvania farm boy was facing a frightening British and Hessian onslaught.

 [Patriots Outflanked](#)

 [History Minute: The Battle of Long Island,](#)


[Part 1](#) (RealAudio)



[Days of Defeat](#)

As he stood on a Brooklyn hill watching the first great battle of the Revolutionary War taking place below him, Gen. George Washington is reported to have said: ``Good God! What brave fellows I must this day lose!"

• [Legacy: The Old Stone House](#)

 [The Battle of Long Island](#)

 [History Minute: The Battle of Long Island,](#)

[Part 2](#) (RealAudio)



[Alive to Fight Another Day](#)

For Gen. George Washington, the task now was not to win the battle, but to save his army. On Thursday morning, Aug. 29, 1776, Washington ordered that all available boats be brought across the East River to Brooklyn Ferry. For the operation he had in mind, the general had the good luck to have two regiments of expert Massachusetts fishermen available, from Marblehead and Salem.

• [Original Source: Let](#)



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 [The Retreat](#)

 [History Minute: The Battle of Long Island, Part 3](#) (RealAudio)



[A Hero's Last Words](#)

Schools are named for him, an honor reserved for heroes. Textbooks cite him as a model of patriotism during the Revolutionary War. Every Memorial Day, the American Legion stops at his gravesite in Mastic to pay him respect.

- [Legacy: Nathaniel](#)

[Woodhull's Grave](#)

- [Descendant: Edward H.](#)

[L. Smith](#)

 [History Minute:](#)

[Nathaniel Woodhull](#)

(RealAudio)



[Long Island's 7-Year Hitch](#)

There is a knock on the door and the woman of the house hurries to answer it. In front of her stands a finely dressed British officer. ``Well, madam," he says politely, ``I've come to take a billet on your house."

- [Descendant: John](#)

[Hewlett](#)

- [Seeking Refuge From](#)

[the British](#)

 [Occupation and](#)

[Revolution](#)

[A Divided Hempstead](#)

In 1775, civil war erupted in the Town of Hempstead. It was a war of words between Loyalists in the south and Patriots in the north, but it was nasty enough to permanently split the town.

- [An Arranged Swap:](#)

[Your Judge for Our](#)

[General](#)



[History Minute:](#)
[Hempstead Town](#)
(RealAudio)



[Flag of a Different Stripe](#)

As visitors swarmed into the New York World's Fair in 1940 they were stopped in their tracks when they came to the Long Island exhibit. They saw a ragged old American flag with the inscription: ``The John Hulbert Flag -- Original Stars and Stripes."

- [Looking Deep Into the Threads](#)



[Those Despicable Deadbeats](#)

Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton brought his Loyalist British Legion into Smithtown on a foraging expedition in November, 1778. He left town a few days later, despised and reviled as an arrogant and ruthless interloper. Also, a cheapskate.

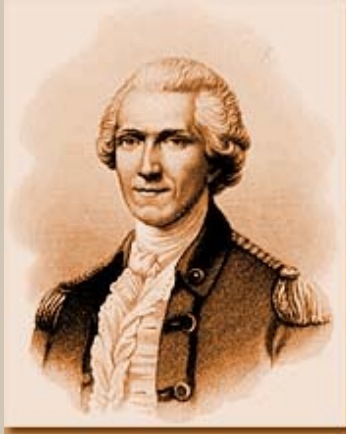


[Huntington Takes On the King](#)

In 1775, no one was more active in the Patriot cause than Gilbert Potter of Huntington, a medical doctor who had served in the French and Indian War. Potter, who a year later would be named a lieutenant colonel in charge of the western regiment of

Suffolk militia, wrote to Congress Dec. 10, begging for more than the 100 pounds of gunpowder it had allotted Huntington in September. He wrote:

- [Legacy: The Huntington Arsenal](#)
- [Huntington's Declaration of Rights](#)
- 🔊 [History Minute: Huntington's Bid For Independence](#) (RealAudio)



[The Man Huntington Loved to Hate](#)

If a Gallup Poll had been taken in Huntington in the winter of 1782-83, Benjamin Thompson would have been the unanimous choice for the most despicable man in town.

- [Legacy: A Desecrated Cemetery](#)
- 🔊 [History Minute: Benjamin Thompson Turns British](#) (RealAudio)



[Nathan Hale: Failed Spy, Superb Patriot](#)


In the pantheon of revolutionary heroes there stands a flaxen-haired, blue-eyed young man, a handsome former schoolteacher, fair of skin and athletic in build, full of hope and promise, fated for an untimely death. He was Nathan Hale.

- [Legacy: Nathan Hale Monument](#)
- 🇺🇸 [Nathan Hale's Travels](#)



[A Ruse Saves the French Fleet](#)



Four years after the botched attempt at spying on the British ended with Nathan Hale's execution, Gen. George Washington needed his Long Island spies. In the summer of 1780, the British were threatening Rhode Island.

 [How the Culper Spy Ring Passed on Information](#)




[Washington's Eyes and Ears](#)

Spying was risky business. Gen. George Washington wanted the newly recruited Culper Spy Ring to be aware of just how risky it was.

- [Legacy: Anna Strong's Grave](#)
-  [History Minute: The Culpers](#)
(RealAudio)
-  [History Minute: Robert Townsend and Anna Strong](#)
(RealAudio)

[Crafty Codes of American Spies](#)

Fearing that their messages might get intercepted by the British, the Culper spies quickly resorted to both secret code and invisible ink.

- [After Their Revolution Was Won](#)
- [Veiled Messages](#)
-  [History Minute: Invisible Ink](#) (RealAudio)



[The Mystery of Agent 355](#)

This grotesque headline, sad and yet deliciously wicked, appeared in the Brooklyn Eagle on May 30, 1948.

• [Descendant: Paul Townsend](#)

🔊 [History Minute: Madame X](#) (RealAudio)



[Passionate About the Past](#)

One of the Culper Spy Ring's deepest secrets eluded historical detectives for almost a century and a half. The real name of the spy known as Culper Jr. was not uncovered until 1939, and the sleuth was a dedicated amateur historian named Morton Pennypacker.

• [Legacy: The Long Island Collection](#)

🔊 [History Minute: Morton Pennypacker's Love for Long Island](#)

(RealAudio)



[Whaleboat Warfare](#)

At 1 p.m. on May 23, 1777, the Patriots began striking back at occupied Long Island.

• [Wanton Piracy on the Sound](#)

• [Legacy: The First Purple Heart](#)

🔊 [History Minute: Whaleboat Raids](#)

(RealAudio)



[Leading the Charge](#)

Here is how William Patchin, a 19-year-old foot soldier from Connecticut, saw his commanding officer, Maj. Benjamin Tallmadge of Setauket:

• [Original Source:](#)

[Risking His Life for His Horse](#)

• [Memoir of Col. Benjamin Tallmadge](#)

🔊 [History Minute: Benjamin Tallmadge](#)

(RealAudio)



[History Is Her Fort](#)

A spent musketball embedded in a clear plastic block hangs from a wall in a church foyer. A red sandstone headstone of a long-dead soldier rests in the garden wall of a Victorian estate. And a corner of a back lawn rises into a grassy mound half the size of a tennis court.



[Revolution's Unseen Rebels](#)

When the war came in the summer of 1776, Benjamin Whitecuff and his older brother, both free blacks, worked on their father's 60-acre farm near Hempstead. But they were on opposite sides of the war. Whitecuff became a spy for the British; his

father and brother joined the Continental army.

- [History as News: Remembering Blacks Who Fought In the Revolution](#)



A Slave and a Poet

A few years after the end of the Revolutionary War, America's first black poet sat in his slave quarters on Lloyd's Neck and composed an eloquent address to his brethren. He looked back at the war and the cause of liberty for which it was fought, and concluded that liberty should be not only be for whites, but for his fellow slaves as well.

- [Legacy: Verse of Jupiter Hammon](#)
- [About Maya Angelou](#)
- [A Dialogue, Entitled, The Kind Master and Dutiful Servant](#)



Frozen Ducks in the Kitchen

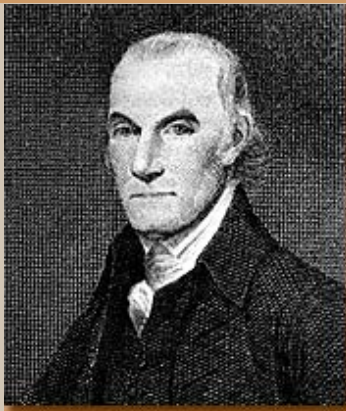
IT WAS so cold the ducks froze.



The Wretched Prison Ships

More Americans died in British prison ships in New York Harbor than in all the battles of the Revolutionary War.

- [Legacy: Memorials To the Dead](#)
- [Inside New York City's 'Loathsome Dungeons'](#)



They Signed for Independence

ON Aug. 10, 1776, William Floyd of Mastic sat down in his room at Mary House's Philadelphia boarding house and wrote a worried and urgent letter. It is not known to whom he wrote, but apparently the letter was to someone in New York City. A week earlier, Floyd and others in the Continental Congress had provoked King George III by signing the Declaration of Independence.

- [Francis Lewis Put Patriotism Before Wealth](#)
- [Never to Be Forgotten](#)



Madison's Unrequited Love

It had all the makings of a romance novel. Passion. Power. Betrayal. While he was tending to the business of a renegade colony, 31-year-old James Madison fell in love with 15-year-old Kitty Floyd, the daughter of William Floyd and one of the most beautiful women the future president had ever seen.



A Long Island Exodus

Sarah Frost began her exile as a Loyalist seven months pregnant. She boarded the ship Two Sisters at Lloyd's Neck on May 25, 1783, with her husband, William, and their two children. On June 28 they arrived at the Bay of Fundy, at the mouth of the Saint John River, in Nova Scotia.

- [The Revolutionary War Comes to an End](#)
- [History Minute:](#)

[William and Sarah Frost](#)

(RealAudio)



[America Celebrates Its New Freedom](#)

As his boat was being rowed out into New York Harbor from the southern tip of Manhattan, Hessian Capt. Johann Ewald looked back on the land he was leaving after seven years of war. Slender and erect in his green coat and vest, with carmine red collar, cuffs and lapels, Ewald had been known for his compassion as well as his courage, but on this day he was just another defeated soldier who had survived.

• [War's Ravages on Long Island](#)

🔊 [History Minute: The British Leave Queens](#)

(RealAudio)



[Washington Says Thanks](#)

The war was over, and Lt. Col. Benjamin Tallmadge was going home to Setauket. But first, he had to say goodbye to his general.

🔊 [History Minute: George Washington](#)

[Slept Here](#) (RealAudio)

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